

Building the Infrastructure for Neuroinclusive Employment

5-YEAR IMPACT REPORT
2021–2026

UConn

WELLS FARGO CENTER
FOR NEURODIVERSITY AND
INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT





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Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

The work reflected in this Impact Report represents a shared commitment from so many people—students, employers, researchers, and community partners—who believe in expanding meaningful employment opportunities for neurodivergent and disabled talent. I’m grateful to each of you for the openness and collaboration that make our progress possible.

Since its start, the Center has focused on one guiding idea: inclusion becomes real when it’s backed by evidence and embedded in everyday workforce practice. Our partnerships, including our work with Wells Fargo, have helped us understand what truly shapes early-career success—from the clarity of onboarding to the role managers play in creating belonging and stability.

A central lesson has emerged again and again: hiring is only the beginning. The experiences employees have once they arrive—the guidance they receive, the systems they navigate, the support structures around them—are what determine whether talent thrives. Studying these moments through the insights of neurodivergent professionals has strengthened our understanding of what makes workplaces work for everyone.

Looking forward, we remain focused on turning these insights into practical tools and guidance that organizations can use at scale. Our commitment is to help employers move from intention to lasting, measurable impact.

Thank you to our partners, collaborators, and especially my team for your steadfast dedication. The accomplishments in these pages belong to all of you.

With appreciation,

Judy Reilly, Executive Director,
Wells Fargo Center for Neurodiversity
and Inclusive Employment,
University of Connecticut



Executive Summary

The Wells Fargo Center for Neurodiversity & Inclusive Employment at UConn addresses a persistent structural failure in the labor market: the lack of durable systems that enable employers to succeed at accessing, hiring, and retaining neurodiverse talent at scale. Despite increased awareness about neurodiversity's workforce value, corporate commitments, and desire for initiatives, employers continue to experience underrepresentation of neurodiverse talent in their organizations, which signals the lost value (and associated costs) of key skills and abilities their workforces require. This gap in representation is not driven by individuals' capabilities, but by the design of company systems.

UConn's Wells Fargo Center was founded to close that gap by delivering practical, evidence-based instruction for companies to build the infrastructure needed to include skilled individuals with neurologically rooted differences in how they:

- Process and prioritize information
- Communicate and respond under pressure
- Manage structure, transitions, and ambiguity
- Read and navigate social expectations

By the end of 2025, the Center has built the infrastructure that connects employers, universities, and neurodiverse talent in repeatable, scalable,

and sustainable ways. Through a 5-year grant from Wells Fargo, along with critical donations from incredible individuals who believe in the Center's work, UConn's Wells Fargo Center has delivered evidence-based guidance and instruction to over 120 Fortune 500 companies for how to rethink their Workforce Operations Models through the lens of neurodivergence. The center launched and continues to drive one-of-a-kind academic research that reveals the measurable outcomes and business value for companies who invest in this work.

This report explains why the Center exists, what it delivers, and how investors' support has translated into lasting systems changes in neurodiversity and employment.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge Stephen DeStefani, a central figure in this work broadly, and especially the support of the center. As the former Enterprise Executive of Wells Fargo's Neurodiversity Ecosystem, Stephen worked tirelessly to bring to fruition the critical academic-corporate partnership this space needed, and to eliminate cost as a barrier to helping other companies access guidance and support that drive their efforts.

THE CENTER'S MISSION

To exponentially grow the number of employers that offer meaningful employment opportunities for neurodivergent individuals seeking full-time, professional positions.

THE CHALLENGE

Employers struggle to access, hire, and retain the full cognitive range of talent critical to their organizations.

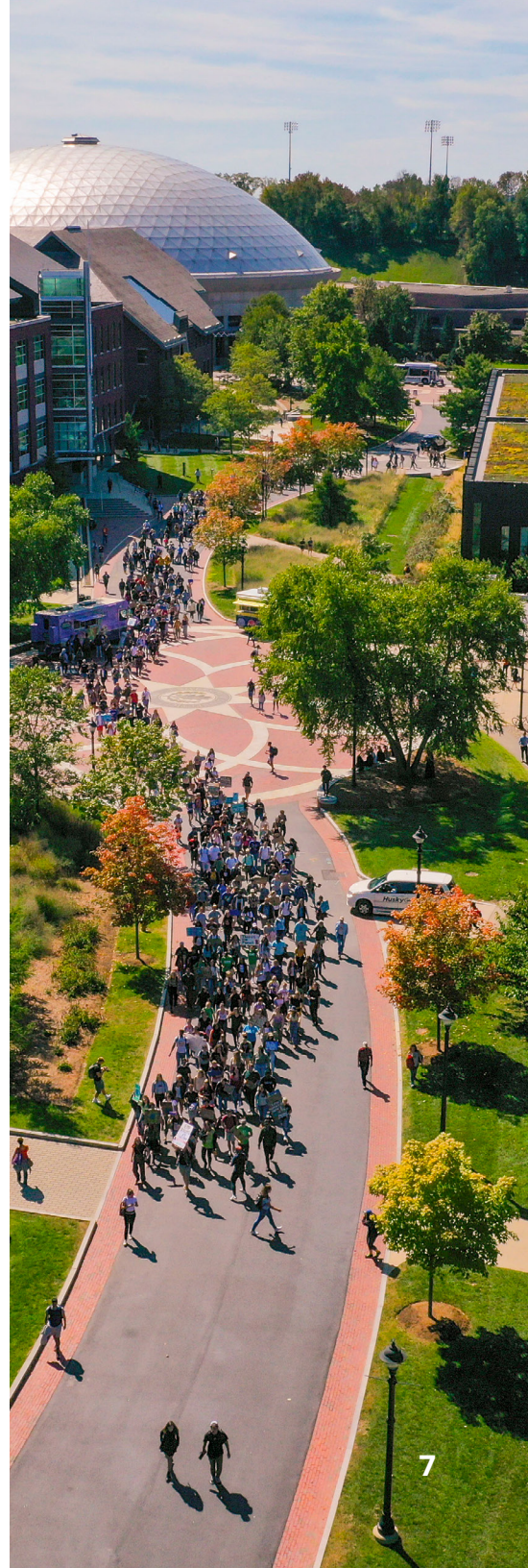
Companies are increasingly aware of "neurodiversity" as a term that may be related to business value for their organization. But efforts to increase neurodiversity in their workforce often stall. Until UConn's Center was launched, no single institution had taken ownership of building scalable employer education and instruction, and efficient systems to connect employers, universities, and talent.

THE CURRENT STATE:

- **Employer Efforts:** stay confined to individual teams or functions rather than integrated into core talent systems.
- **Persistent Inequity:** 38% of above-average, college-educated neurodivergent individuals continue to experience unemployment and underemployment.
- **Champion Dependency:** employer efforts rely on individual leaders, limiting scalability, continuity, and long-term impact.

The challenge is an absence of sustainable infrastructure—within both companies, and the communities in which they operate.

Investment in UConn's Center is critical to enabling employers to understand the value of neurodiversity to their organizations, learn and implement long-term design into their workforce models, and connect with the broadest cognitive range of talent they need.



A Letter from Our Corporate Partner, Wells Fargo

We are proud of Wells Fargo’s partnership with the UConn Center for Neurodiversity and Inclusive Employment—not because it reflects what we believe, but because it demonstrates what we are doing.

This work is rooted in action. Wells Fargo launched our Neurodiversity Program to help build a more inclusive culture—one that recognizes diverse ways of thinking and removes barriers to entry so individuals with varying abilities can access opportunity and thrive. It’s reported that neurodivergent individuals experience unemployment rates several times higher than the general population. We listened, learned, and saw the impact firsthand; the program evolved into the Wells Fargo Neurodiversity Inclusion Program—reinforcing our commitment to expanding access to meaningful employment opportunities.

The Neurodiversity Inclusion Program focuses on creating meaningful employment through a more thoughtful, accommodating, and skills-based hiring approach. We’ve modernized our sourcing and selection to identify talent rather than excluding it. Alongside this, the program provides education, professional support, and enablement initiatives that enrich our employee experience and prepare managers and teams for sustained success.

What started as a targeted initiative is now embedded across our enterprise. Today, we proudly support all business divisions at Wells Fargo, demonstrating inclusive employment and how we build a stronger, more innovative workforce.

For too long, conversations about inclusive employment have centered on awareness: awareness of barriers and awareness of untapped potential. Awareness matters—but awareness alone does not change outcomes. Action does. And the work of the UConn Center is helping organizations make that critical shift from intention to implementation.

Over the past year, the Center has made a real impact: rigorous research, employer education, and practical hiring models are redefining inclusive employment. Evidence-based practices, confident managers, and neurodivergent individuals thriving in valued careers demonstrate the power of this work.

We see neurodiversity as a responsibility and a competitive advantage. When organizations broaden who they hire and how they support talent, they unlock innovation, strengthen teams, and build resilience for the future of work. That is why we remain committed to accelerating progress—by investing in research that raises the bar, championing practices that expand access to opportunity, and collaborating across industry and higher education to scale what works.

But this work cannot—and should not—be done by one organization alone.

Employers must move beyond pilots and promises, beyond checklists and one time initiatives. We must embed inclusive employment into how we recruit, develop, and retain talent. We must modernize systems, educate leaders, and create environments where we can do their best work. And we encourage more companies to join us—by engaging with the Neurodiversity Program Talent Community and committing to inclusive hiring models.

Our partnership with UConn reflects that commitment. Together, we are advancing best in class standards for neurodiversity and inclusive employment, opening doors to meaningful careers, and shaping a workforce ecosystem where more people can belong and thrive.

Ebony A. Burt

Ebony A. Burt,
Head of Inclusion and Opportunity,
Wells Fargo



Your Gift. Your Impact.

At the Wells Fargo Center for Neurodiversity Inclusion and Employment, we believe strong connections are critical to an organization thriving in an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Our growth and impact would not be possible without the generosity of our dedicated sponsors and donors. This support does more than sustain programming; it builds critical bridges between employers and an often-underserved talent population, creating pathways to meaningful employment and scalable return on investment.

Thanks to these valued partnerships, we have been able to expand our reach, strengthen our programming, and deepen our impact across the neurodiversity employment landscape.

As we reflect on this past fiscal year, we are incredibly grateful and inspired by the outpouring of support from our Center’s community. Your generosity represents more than a financial contribution; it is an investment in the future of this work and a shared belief in the importance of creating more inclusive workplaces and opportunities.

We know that meaningful change happens when communities come together with purpose. Because of your support, that change is already in motion. Your contributions reflect a collective commitment to empowering neurodivergent individuals, equipping employers, and advancing programs that create lasting, measurable impact. These funds will help us continue building innovative pathways to employment, expanding opportunities for individuals and organizations alike, and driving forward a more inclusive workforce for the future.

With sincere gratitude, we recognize and celebrate the individuals and organizations whose generosity makes this mission possible.

CORPORATE FOUNDING PARTNER:



STRATEGIC CORPORATE PARTNERS:



WORKSHOP HOST SPONSOR PARTNERS:



CORPORATE SUPPORT:

Adecco, Amazon, Banner Life, Blueprint Medicines, Boeing, Element Solutions Inc., ESPN, Expedia, Eversource Energy, Liberty Mutual, Mastercard, Mentra, Pratt & Whitney, Snell & Wilmer, The Hartford, Walmart

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Whalen Family Charitable Fund

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Why UConn & Why This Center?

UConn occupies a rare and critical position at the intersection of academic excellence, subject matter expertise, and employer pragmatism. As a top-tier public research university, UConn brings credibility, neutrality, and a convening role to enable collaboration across sectors that is difficult to achieve otherwise.

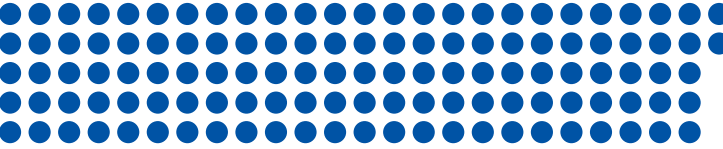
- **Trusted Relationships:** With employers across many sectors.
- **Intentional Engagement:** With students, supported professionals, and disability communities.
- **Academic Research Rigor:** Capacity that informs evidence-based practice anchored in university-level academic standards.
- **Connection:** The ability to convene corporations, universities, and nonprofits, as a neutral intermediary.

“There is no one right role—we make it the right role.”

Stephen DeStefani, Former Corporate Neurodiversity Enterprise Executive

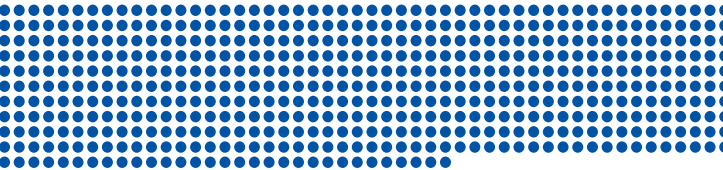
IMPACT BY NUMBERS

Number of companies who have engaged in UConn’s Neurodiversity Employer courses, workshops, and programs:



122 organizations

Number of professionals who have worked as teams at one of the Center’s flagship full-day Neurodiversity Initiative Design Workshop:



531 professionals Talent Acquisition, Workforce Strategy, and Executive leaders from 106 employers

Countries where UConn’s full-day neurodiversity workshops have been delivered:



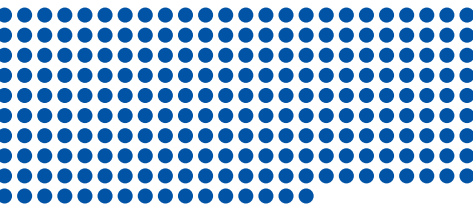
US, UK, Canada (11 deliveries... 10 cities!)

Number of companies who have installed UConn’s on-demand neurodiversity training on internal learning systems:



10 global employers

Number of internships and full-time positions “made neuroinclusive” by companies with UConn’s support (and then promoted by UConn to ND jobseekers and students across our national network!):

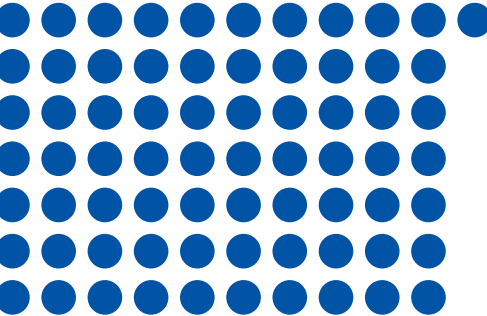


241 internships & positions

Number of university and community partners helping UConn reach neurodivergent job seekers across the US:



In 2025 alone, number of students UConn connected into corporate neurodiversity employment opportunities:



71 neurodivergent college students placed

Number of different types of jobs and roles UConn’s center has circulated to ND job seekers nationally:

34 distinct role types from HR to tech to engineering

2,000+



UConn Center's Pillars of Focus

The Center's Strategy rests on 3 key pillars of focus:

1

Employer Education
From Intent to Infrastructure

For companies across the US, UK, and Canada, the Center delivers one-of-a-kind neurodiversity education, training, and company support that transforms the ways organizations hire and retain talent.

2

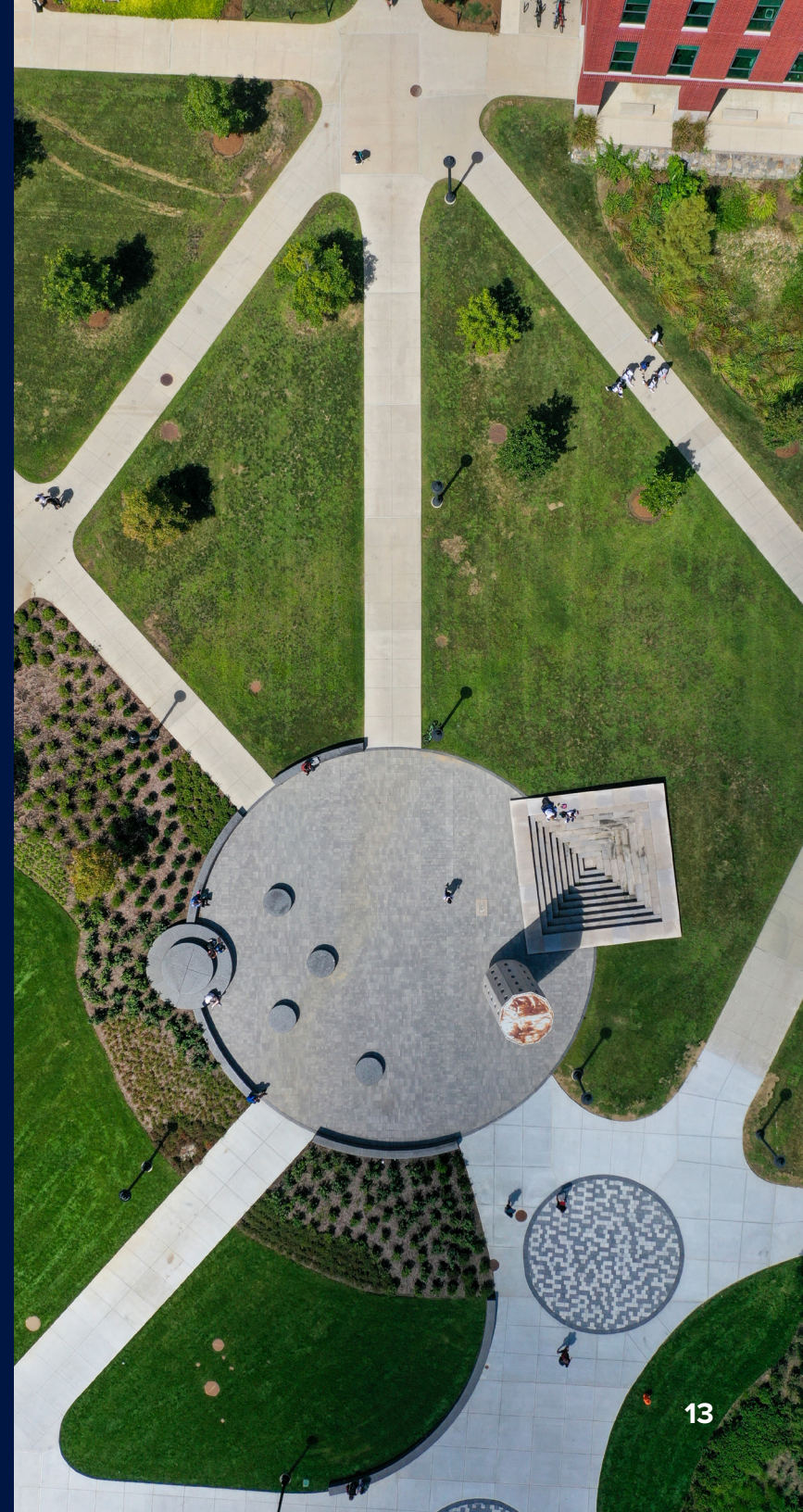
Candidate Connection
From Potential to Placement

The Center serves as the hub for 100s of universities, colleges, non-profits, partners and agencies who want to connect with employers that are truly leaning into this work.

3

Research Studies
From Insight to Implementation

The Center launched the first business-school-based academic research focused on generating evidence of organizational outcomes ("ROI") for companies investing in neurodiversity initiatives.





Pillar 1

Employer Education: from Intent to Infrastructure

FLAGSHIP WORKSHOP: WORKFORCE OPERATING MODEL AND NEURODIVERSITY

Since October 2024, Wells Fargo and UConn have collaborated in delivering grant-funded education to 106 companies through the Center’s flagship workshop model. At no cost to participating companies, this workshop has been delivered 11 times in 10 cities across the US and UK. The full-day workshop is a one-of-a-kind learning opportunity that delivers insights and hands-on design guidance for companies to rethink their hiring and retention systems through the lens of neurodivergence. The 8 hour event equips companies with proven strategies they can take back to their organizations and implement to enhance talent acquisition and workforce engagement.

Built from the Wells Fargo—UConn Corporate Academic Partnership, the workshop design is based on distilling Wells Fargo’s leading corporate model of excellence into dimensions of application for other companies (cost free). Workshops convene up to 20 companies at a time, and take place from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM in a designated city where a Host Sponsor company contributes their space, brand, and support to the event. Teams of 3-5 leaders per company engage in hands-on learning and design while factoring in their unique industry, organizational culture, strategic priorities, core values, and existing infrastructure contexts.

In 2024-2025, UConn and Wells Fargo co-instructed the workshops, offering a unique opportunity for companies to access lived corporate experience and academic design.

Workshop Locations

In the United States, our Center has hosted workshops in the following locations:
New York City, New York (x2); Nashville, Tennessee;
Boston, Massachusetts; Houston, Texas;
Saint Louis, Missouri; Minneapolis, Minnesota;
Hartford, Connecticut

International workshops:
London, United Kingdom;
Bournemouth, United Kingdom;
Toronto, Canada

Speaking Engagements: Why Do (So Many) Companies Start With a Speaking Engagement?

Companies continuously reach out to UConn’s Center for dynamic presentations that educate teams and spark meaningful conversations about the value of neurodiversity in the workplace. Companies report that these sessions catalyze engagement and leadership’s attention. Neurodivergence directly affects 15–20% of the population, and a single, well-executed event signals a company’s genuine commitment to this topic for all employees.

Courses and Education

Neurodiversity at Work Overview Course:
An introductory course about what neurodiversity means in the context of employment, and how to gain confidence in the topic regardless of your role or function at the organization. *Overview course (60 min).*

Neurodiversity Foundations Course:
A deeper dive into our foundations course for broad audiences within organizations, including how to apply this knowledge in day-to-day actions. *(Flexible length: 90 min – 4 hours/multi-day)*

Managers of People: Excellence in Neurodiversity:
For managers who want to understand how to actively utilize “neuroinclusive” practices and tools when leading teams and managing individuals. *(Flexible length: 90 min – 4.5 hours/multi-day)*

Coaches, Mentors, & Resource Groups:
Building Inclusive Culture: For individuals in the company who want to facilitate neuroinclusion by supporting managers and neurodivergent employees 1-1 or through specialized programming. *(Flexible length: 90 min – 4.5 hours/multi-day)*

HR Support Professionals: Excellence in Neurodiversity: For individuals in HR support roles who want to incorporate a deeper understanding of neurodiversity into their guidance and advocacy for employees in the organization. *(Flexible length: 90 min – 4.5 hours/multi-day)*

- Delivery Options:**
- **On-Demand/Self-Paced:** Access via UConn’s platform or your company’s internal learning platform
 - **Live Instructor-Led:** In-person or virtual delivery (combine with on-demand courses to maximize learning)



Pillar 2

Candidate Connection: from Potential to Placement

TESTIMONIALS

“Through the Center for Neurodiversity and Inclusive Employment, I was able to connect with employers who truly value and utilize my unique skillset. The guidance, resources, and introductions I received gave me confidence throughout the job search process and helped me secure a role where I feel supported and understood.”

“This program didn’t just help me find a job, it helped me find a workplace where I can succeed as my authentic self. I’m incredibly grateful for the opportunities and encouragement the Center provided.”

“Participating in the Neurodiversity Career Experience was an incredibly meaningful opportunity. Spending the day with an employer gave me real insight into professional workplace expectations and potential career paths, while allowing me to engage directly with industry professionals in a structured and supportive environment.”

**The Neurodiversity Career Experience program was developed with funds from Synchrony. It has been delivered in partnership with Synchrony since 2023 and is going strong!*



The Center has three national networks to connect individuals who identify as neurodivergent/having a disability with professional full-time inclusive employment opportunities:

- 1. **Neuroinclusive Candidate Network:** for individuals who identify as neurodivergent/having a disability.
- 2. **University and Community Council:** for support professionals and community organizations/allies.
- 3. **Inclusive Employer Network:** for companies who have shown commitment to neuroinclusion through education and changes in organizational practice.

Outcome: Job seekers connect *directly* with inclusive employers who share open job opportunities in accessible formats with thoughtful, clarity driven considerations.

Neurodiversity Career Experience*

1 University + 1 Company = Customizable 1 to 2 day experience.

Blueprint Medicines & Curry College

On October 21, 2025, UConn’s Wells Fargo Center for Neurodiversity and Inclusive Employment hosted a one-day Neurodiversity Career Experience (NDCE) connecting college students with a leading biopharmaceutical employer. The experience provided students with hands-on exposure to professional environments and career pathways, while employers gained practical insight into neuroinclusive practices. The NDCE model creates measurable, mutual impact—strengthening students’ career readiness and building employer confidence in engaging neurodivergent talent.

Pillar 3

Research Studies: from Insight to Implementation

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES FOCUSED:

The Center is focused on research that addresses the business case: What are the outcomes and implications for organizations when they pursue a neurodiversity initiative?

Many scholars and academic institutions focus on outcomes and workplace experience for ND individuals, but not the employers. UConn’s distinction is its business-school foundational focus on what happens to organizations themselves when they take action in the space of neuroinclusion. In other words, what is the “ROI/Business Case” that compels executive decision makers to prioritize neurodiversity as a strategic decision?

2025 Research Study: Evidence-Based Outcomes of Wells Fargo’s Employer Neurodiversity Program

In 2025, researchers at the UConn Wells Fargo Center for Neurodiversity and Inclusive Employment completed a one-of-a-kind academic research study to measure the organizational impact of a corporate neurodiversity initiative.

The findings from this one-of-a-kind academic research study revealed that neurodivergent employees whose managers participated in Wells Fargo’s program reported higher psychological safety and lower turnover intentions. Managers became measurably more effective leaders across their entire teams, not just with neurodivergent employees, embedding inclusive practices into their everyday management approach. Even employees with no direct connection to the program reported positive perceptions of Wells Fargo’s values around inclusion and psychological safety, confirming that well-designed initiatives can shape organizational culture through practice rather than proclamation.

The Center’s vision is to build a growing body of research across employers of varying industries, sizes, and program designs—each study defining what a company did and measuring what happened organizationally as a result. Over time, this evidence base will give employer leaders something that has never existed before: precise, comparable data to inform their own investment decisions. Because without evidence that quantifies what actually happens for a company when it invests in neurodiversity, the business case that compels organizational investment cannot be made. Wells Fargo’s willingness to open its organization to independent academic scrutiny made this first study possible, and we are deeply grateful for that partnership. The work ahead is to ensure it is not the last.

Center’s Research Affiliate Director:



Elizabeth Follmer, University of Washington Bothell Business School. ND Employment Business School Scholar; Founder and Leader of the AOM Neurodiversity Research Community.

In the Press

- [UConn Wells Fargo Partnership Video](#)
- [UConn Today Article \(Jan 2025\)](#)
- [PR Newswire press release \(Jan 2025\)](#)
- [Insight into Academia article \(Nov 2024\)](#)
- [PR Newswire press release: grant announcement \(Oct 2024\)](#)
- [UConn Today Article \(Apr 2024 in preparation for grant application\)](#)
- [Wells Fargo Center for Neurodiversity and Inclusive Employment website](#)
- [LinkedIn Executive Director Wells Fargo promotion](#)
- [LinkedIn UConn Center Wells Fargo promotion](#)
- [UConn – Wells Fargo Workshop Flyer \(sample – St. Louis 7/30/25\)](#)



Saul Van Beurden,
Chief Executive Officer
of Consumer, Small,
& Business Banking,
Wells Fargo



Workforce evolution and inclusion through neurodiversity

Saul Van Beurden is Wells Fargo’s Head of Artificial Intelligence and co-CEO of Consumer Banking and Lending. The company’s Neurodiversity Employment Program he started in Technology in 2020 now spans nine functions, including branches. “It is a win for families, candidates and the company,” he emphasized. Retention runs about 90 percent after four and a half years and 15 percent have been promoted. The program partners with the University of Connecticut, which now teaches other firms how to adopt and scale similar approaches.

“We hire for careers not roles,” Van Beurden said. “The productivity gains are real but the purpose is inclusion and opportunity.”

Click below to read in Forbes Magazine:

[Saul Van Beurden On How Wells Fargo Scaled Trust, AI And Growth](#)

Companies develop programs to hire neurodivergent candidates – ABC News

Businesses are training their hiring managers in new ways that bring in neurodivergent candidates. Click to view this on YouTube: [ABC News Video](#)

Meet the Team



Judy Reilly, Executive Director



Kathleen Engle, Director of Operations



Allison Nemeth,
Director of Stakeholder Engagement



Moira Rosek, Program Manager

Get Involved

NEURODIVERSITY-EMPLOYMENT
.CENTER.UCONN.EDU

neurodiversity-employment@uconn.edu



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